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THE PRESENT SITUATION IN THE CARIBBEAN

*By Samuel Guy Inman, Executive Secretary of the Committee
on Cooperation in Latin America*

It may be that I am the only one present at the Conference who has visited during the last year all of the countries of the Caribbean where the United States maintains a force of soldiers. I will therefore speak informally of political conditions as I found them in some of the most interesting of those countries, rather than trace the historical facts, already amply described, which led up to the present influence of the United States Government in the life of these countries.

The outstanding impressions of a trip through the countries of the American Mediterranean are, first, the marked backwardness of most of them in matters of educational and moral progress, and, second, the overwhelming influence of the United States in their economic and political life. It makes no difference how much one may have read about the situation, it is impossible to realize until he has made a visit to them one after another just how true it is that the United States holds these countries absolutely in the hollow of her hand.

Ordinarily when one is to have an audience with a Latin American president he practices up his best Spanish phrases and etiquette. But I recently found in Santo Domingo that this was all unnecessary. The president of the Dominican Republic when I was presented spoke to me in charming English. For he was none other than a rear-admiral of the United States navy. On being presented to the minister of foreign affairs, I found that he was an officer in the United States Marine Corps, as was the minister of war, minister of public works and the rest of the cabinet in this *Republic*. There is a certain advantage in this for the American visitor, commercial man and even for the

American minister, who, curiously enough, is still accredited and maintained before the government of the Dominican Republic. Here at least is one Latin American government which appreciates the English language and the North American view-point enough to adopt them, which seems to be what the average American thinks the whole world should do.

One is deeply impressed with the fine spirit in which the admiral and his cabinet are carrying on their work, which they seem to regard as a real missionary job. The admiral said that when he first received the request from Admiral Benson in Paris to go to Santo Domingo, he said abruptly, "I won't go." Benson's cable back to the department was, "Disappointed in Snowden." The department again put it up to Snowden, telling him he was holding up the whole navy program. So he decided to go. Now that he is down there he has become so interested in helping these people that he would like to spend the rest of his official life working out the problems now before him. This represents the spirit of many of our men, in spite of the criticism one often hears on the military authorities.

The chief trouble with Santo Domingo is the utter absence of all the facilities and forces that we associate with modern civilization. The capital has no street cars, no sewers, water or telephone systems, only a few private electric light plants and no building ever erected entirely for school purposes. Illiteracy on the Island is calculated at 90 to 95 per cent of persons over ten years of age. Many country people have no sense of numbers above five. There are practically no roads, and the northern and southern parts of the island are like two different countries. Venereal diseases, hookworm, malaria and tuberculosis run riot without anyone knowing how to treat them.

The primary object of my visit was to survey the country and suggest a united program of service which could be undertaken to help in the Island's development. Practically every person I asked as to what the people were in particular need of replied, "Everything." If I suggested this or that or the other institution or activity, the reply

was, "Yes, anything you can do for these people will be worth while. Don't be afraid of duplicating or doing too much. That would be impossible."

After a week in the capital, I drew up a tentative program and invited ten gentlemen to meet me at luncheon to discuss it. There were present the admiral and his staff, the president and his cabinet, as you choose to call them, the chaplain of the marines, the archdeacon of the Episcopal church and others. Admiral Snowden expressed himself later in a letter as follows:

I beg to thank you for your hospitality of yesterday at the Enlisted Men's Club, which was a most enjoyable meeting. I was very much interested in the program you presented and which we discussed, and most cordially endorse the program and hope that we can arrange coöperation so that the many beneficial institutions there outlined can be materialized for the benefit of the Dominican people. These people are in the greatest need of the institutions therein specified. They are to a great extent a backward people who need an object lesson in modern ideas and ideals. They would be willing to help themselves later on, at which time they can be taught the value of these moral and industrial activities.

Here is the difficulty with the present situation. A military government is not designed to educate a people and develop them in self-expression and government. In the first place, there is too much government. Martial law always means regulation of every detail of life. People cannot meet in public gatherings to discuss their problems. The newspapers cannot discuss political questions, and criticisms are not to be thought of. Individuals talk mostly in whispers if they answer adversely your inquiries as to how they like the present order.

In the second place, a foreign military government conducted largely by officials who cannot speak the language of the people and who have no idea of their history or national psychology must necessarily be an unjust government. Some of the American officials do their work in as fine a spirit as any missionary who went to serve in a foreign mission station. But this does not keep them from making great mistakes when they arbitrarily determine great prob-

lems of taxation, education and economic and social life. The United States navy has not had sufficient experience in colonization to have built up a body of experts in such matters. Officers are changed too often to build up a body of experience and enlisted men are too anxious to get home to take any interest in the people.

Two illustrations occur to me. With perfectly good intentions the government was planning a landtax and was about to require the properties to be registered. But if it works out as it did a few years ago in Mexico it will mean that the ignorant natives, who have enjoyed the use of lands without question from generation to generation, will find that their properties are registered in the name of slick politicians who will thus build up great landed estates by robbing the common people.

In the matter of education a wonderful showing has been made in the primary schools, which have grown from an enrollment of some 30,000 three years ago up to 90,000 at present, due to the herculean efforts of Colonel Lane, the Minister of Education. But Colonel Lane has now left. His efforts were centered on combating illiteracy. There are no permanent foundations laid for building up either of two indispensable educational forces, an adequate teaching staff or universal training of children along industrial lines. Higher education is almost wholly lacking and the provision of former governments to send a number of students to foreign countries has been discontinued by the military government because of these students interesting themselves in political problems.

In the third place the governors and the governed live entirely apart from one another and there is practically no means of intercourse. While a few Dominicans have been employed to assist the Americans, they have thus largely cut themselves off from their own people. The Americans generally remain to themselves and the Dominicans do likewise, if for no other reason than the simple one that 99 per cent of each party is unfamiliar with the language of the other.

This was brought home to me by a visit to Señor Federico Garcia Godoy, one of the most noted literary men in Latin America. American army men in La Vega, his home, did not even know there was such a man. When he found out that I was not, as he supposed, a commercial traveler, and that I had read his books and knew some of his friends in the literary world of Latin America, he was overjoyed. To meet an American who could talk of history, literature, international politics and other things belonging to his world seemed to give him the surprise of his life. So I was all the time meeting choice spirits among the Dominicans and the Americans, but who knew nothing of one another. The situation which shuts out entirely from the moulding of national life some of these splendid Dominicans that are well known for their ability in other parts of the world, is an impossible situation.

The Dominicans recognize that they have made a mess of governing themselves during the hundred years they tried it. They are not unmindful of the benefits that have come from peace and increased prosperity enjoyed under American rule. Few ever expect to be entirely out from under American influence. Strange to say, I found most of them preferring their present situation to that of Haiti, they reasoning as follows: The present military government is essentially temporary, though it may last many years. Public opinion of the world will not allow it to continue indefinitely so long as we refuse to accept it. If we should sign a treaty like that signed by Haiti, then we ourselves would be to blame for our loss of sovereignty. Give us a treaty along the lines of the arrangement with Cuba. Then you can protect your commercial interests and help us restore order if we return to political turmoil. But if we are good, then we can direct our own affairs.

If there were time, it would be interesting to point out some of the splendid things that the American authorities have done in the way of building roads and port works, improving sanitary conditions, paying foreign bond holders, providing stable conditions for business, etc. Frankness would compel me to say, however, that even in these mate-

rial matters I was disappointed in the results, especially in the two important matters of providing overland communication between the northern and southern halves of the island and the suppression of the terrible disorder in the interior of the country which still renders it unsafe for travelers. There seems to be no letting up whatever in the banditry, and an American probably runs greater risks in traveling through certain districts than at any other time in the history of the country.

One of the greatest difficulties with the present situation, however, is that the people are not being prepared for government. The Dominicans have no responsibility placed on them. They have no incentive toward progress except material prosperity. More of their children may be taught to read and write, more may secure advanced wages from foreign corporations and more may enjoy automobile rides on good roads, but the present military government by its very nature cannot give itself to the development of the nobler things of life. For this reason and for the other that, whatever exigencies of war may have compelled us to take over Santo Domingo, the American people cannot permanently consent to robbing a people of their sovereignty. The present situation is an impossible one. I feel sure that no one more fully recognizes this than the responsible American officials concerned and that they will soon bring about the needed change.

The situation in Haiti is very similar in many ways to that of Santo Domingo. But our authority in Haiti is secured by treaty. In each country the military force is the dominating one.

The first thing for a visitor to do, either in Santo Domingo or Haiti is to report to the local American officer in command. The arrangements between our military forces in the two countries is different, however, at least in theory. In Santo Domingo there is no pretense of federal government except by the American military forces. In Haiti there is a president, cabinet and sometimes a congress, with governors and local officials, which function in certain matters as long as they are willing to cooperate with the American military authorities.

There is, then, a dual government in Haiti, one the native government and the other the American Marines, headed by the general in command. If the native gendarmerie is counted, and it has large authority, there may be said to be three governments.

The man of most power is the Financial Adviser, an American, who has final authority over the various items of expenditure by the national treasury. In matters like sanitation, the United States government details an officer from the navy or the marine corps to serve under the Haitian government. The gendarmerie, like the *Guardia Nacional* of Santo Domingo, is composed of native soldiers officered by American marines, privates or non-commissioned officers, who have been detailed by the marine corps for this work after they have stood examination in elementary French and in Haitian law. Marines are only stationed permanently in the larger towns, but the gendarmes are found scattered all over the country as well as in all the cities. Where both forces are found their barracks are in different parts of the town. As the officers of the gendarmes are only enlisted men in the Marine Corps and the private gendarmes are Haitians, there is naturally little relation between the personnel of the two organizations.

The marine who becomes an officer in the gendarmerie finds himself clothed with almost unlimited power in the district where he serves. He is the judge of practically all civil and criminal cases, settling everything from a family fight to a murder. He is the paymaster of all funds expended by the national government, he is ex-officio director of the schools, inasmuch as he pays the teachers. He controls the mayor and city council, since they can spend no funds without his O.K. As collector of taxes he exercises a strong influence on all individuals of the community. It is no wonder that an ordinary private in the marine corps, with a few months residence in a foreign country, where people are at a very low stage of civilization, and he himself with little or no preparation for such varied responsibilities as are thrust upon him, is often accused of many abuses and mistakes. When one sees the awful conditions

under which these gendarme officers are called to live, he wonders if he himself would do any better under the same circumstances. But the fact remains that it is impossible to get anywhere in reforming a people who see nothing to admire in the reformer, who too seldom tempers justice with mercy but often inflicts a punishment more severe than the crime.

The fight being waged by the force of marines and the gendarmerie for the extermination of the *cacos*, or bandits, is growing more serious constantly. While we were not molested on the main road, it was evident everywhere that we were in a country where there was real war. Most of the big posts were stripped of men except barely enough to do necessary guard duty, the rest of them being out in the hills after the bandits. These outlaws go about in bands numbering from twenty-five to two hundred. Not more than 20 or 30 per cent are armed and these are very poor shots, so that there are few casualties among our men. They are now making a systematic drive and closing in on the bandits and in some battles from twenty-five to sixty are killed. It is the hardest sort of military work.

The bandits may be sighted on top of a hill, and by the time our men hike to the spot their quarry will have crossed over to the next hill-top and will holloa across making fun of the slow *Americanos*. There is nothing to be done but to keep on chasing them until through strategy or forced marches they are within gun shot. The range needs to be close, as the *cacos* are little affected by a wound that will put an ordinary man out of business. I saw one man who had been accidentally shot and brought into the fort where a gendarme was probing for the bullet with what looked to me like a needle used to sew up potato sacks. The blood was flowing profusely as the probe went here and there, but the man lay as still as though absolutely nothing was going on. After seeing that I was more ready to believe the stories of how they kept coming after they had been shot in a way that would be fatal immediately to most men.

One's heart goes out toward our boys who are engaged in this terrible business. Often their forced marches without

food last for many long hours and even days. Months are spent in the wild country without seeing any civilized life whatever, without any amusements, without even a newspaper or magazine. Even in the smaller towns on the main road of travel we found posts where the men had not seen a newspaper for four months, and had no means of recreation whatever. The few chaplains are working hard on this matter, and one has just succeeded in getting a motion picture machine sent way up into the hills in the interior where the fighting is worst and where living conditions are almost unbearable. For we must remember that interior Haiti is like interior Africa, where natives live the most degraded lives.

The men out on the field agree that the situation is getting worse rather than better. They only see an end to it when all the *cacos* shall have been exterminated. But when will this be accomplished? In the killing of the present crop others are grown. While Haiti has always had its professional revolutionists and country bands who lived by robbery, there seems to be a general agreement that the present acute trouble was developed by the American officers of the gendarmerie enforcing too rigidly an old law requiring men to work the roads four days a month. This has now been abandoned, and all road workers are paid a *gourde* (twenty cents gold) per day for their work. But the opposition to government has been augmented to such an extent that the American authorities see no way of settling it except by the sword. In the short time I was in the country I was not able to form a proper judgment as to whether there was any particular political purpose behind this opposition to the Americans on the part of the *cacos*, or whether they were simply a lot of bandits who preferred to live by pillage rather than by work. One hears, of course, both opinions expressed.

It is with great hesitancy that one even seemingly passes criticism upon our American marines. No man knows but that he might act in the same way under similar conditions. It is the machine, not the man, that is to blame. From the military standpoint, it is natural to regard all life as cheap;

especially when stationed in a country where people are little above the animal, where you are hated and your life is sought, if not by all, at least by organized bands who compel you to sleep with your hands on your arms, and where, if ever caught, you know you will be subject to unmentionable torture before you meet a horrible death. Under such conditions it is easy to live up to the rule of "take no prisoners" and to have small respect for the rights and property of those who have no respect for you and little for themselves.

Military life, moreover, does not lend itself to civil reforms, for it is based on caste. Discipline is only maintained by obeying without question your superior. The private is subject to the ire of the sergeant, the sergeant to the lieutenant, the lieutenant to the captain, and so on. And very likely the ire of all is visited on the civilian. As a young editor, who had to take his paper to the military authorities for their censorship before it was published, said, "We want a civil government so we can approach them. You go to see one of the military authorities. You know he is a very fine man. But he has a guard at the door who uncereemoniously tells you to 'get out, and do it quick!'" Is it any wonder that the bandit situation doesn't get better under such treatment or that the American soldier acts as he does under the conditions described, when he has never had any training for administrative or democratizing work? My duties have carried me into many of the out of the way places of the world, where moral restraint was largely removed. But in no place have I ever seen American men descend so low in orgies with native rum and native women as in interior Haiti. But they were not typical of our soldiers, many of whom are putting up a heroic fight for character against awful odds.

The same thing applies to moral life. Who will throw the first stone at the man who is compelled to live away from all that is pure and ennobling, without religious or moral influences of any kind, without books or recreation often, without even a baseball or a victrola, in the midst of the vilest native life where men have little virtue and women

small sense of shame? The whole thing is absolutely unnatural. If necessary for a few months under extraordinary conditions, it should certainly not be allowed to exist through the years that men do not get into a pure atmosphere or see good women of their own race or hear a moral exhortation for two or three years, as happens with some of our men here. Such men too often have their whole moral makeup changed.

The best of the officers in Haiti realize that the situation is not satisfactory and are doing what they can to correct it. "So far we have done little for Haiti except stop the graft—and that has not made the people like us! It is time we were doing some constructive service for these people." Thus spoke the commander of the American marines in Haiti. Of course he did not mean that literally because already much has been accomplished in the building of roads, sanitation of cities, improvement of the postal service and other public activities. The national debt, which constantly threatened the independent life of the nation, is being gradually liquidated.

If our government is to go forward satisfactorily with the tremendous job it has begun there must be in every case the most careful selection of the men who are sent to deal with these people. When we began our work in the Philippines we sent a man like Mr. Taft to begin the development of the people into a democracy. He found much the same conditions as now exist in Haiti. When he began to talk about "our little brown brother" it took strong measures to stop the sarcasm of the soldiers who sang, "He may be a brother of William H. T., but he ain't no kin to mè." But the new spirit prevailed and today the development of the Filipino toward democracy is the pride of every American. The job in Haiti is a harder one, but it can be accomplished by a combination of the highest type of administrative and moral leadership.

The following extracts from the letter of a naval officer emphasize the duty of the United States to render an unselfish service to the backward people of this island:

In 1914 while I was on duty in Haiti and Santo Domingo the thought occurred to me how the natives of these islands had been neglected by the various philanthropic and religious societies of the United States.

Again, after five years in Europe, I have once more returned to Santo Domingo. Meanwhile we have actually taken over the government of this Island and our moral responsibility for the improvement and progress of the natives has been greatly increased, while I note the same indifference on the part of the various philanthropic and welfare organizations of the United States toward this work.

The citizens of the United States, out of private funds, have spent millions of dollars in helping and assisting the peoples of war-stricken Europe. The peoples of war-stricken Haiti, our own particular wards, the responsibility for whose betterment we cannot now escape in view of the occupation, have received practically nothing.

Europe has suffered from the devastation of wars for five years; Haiti and Santo Domingo for over a hundred. At least 50 per cent of the population are practically reduced to savagery; a certain proportion are in the same condition as their ancestors were when they were brought in slavery from the African jungles.

I do not believe that the various charitable and philanthropic institutions, which after all represent the public—the people of the United States—wish to shirk their moral responsibilities towards these unfortunate people. Their neglect up until now, their bending all their energies towards Europe at the expense of their foster-child is attributable only to ignorance and lack of knowledge of conditions.

But now the United States has occupied the Island, the American people should no longer remain in ignorance of the true conditions. As soon as they realize and can visualize the state of affairs, knowing that now we are legally and morally responsible, have got to see the thing through, I'm sure they will respond as they have always done to stricken and unfortunate branches of the human race.

In Central America I found a different attitude toward the United States than in any other part of the Southland. There seems to be a rather general feeling that there is no use of longer kicking against the pricks. The North American influence must remain predominant and the best thing to do now is to work toward making it a just influence. While there is plenty of the kind of prejudice that Ugarte and his school stand for in other parts of Latin America and there is much resentment at direct interference with the internal affairs of the various countries especially in regard

to the presence of the marines and the Bryan-Chamorro treaty in Nicaragua, the reasoning of the average man seems to run something like this: "Our economic life must necessarily depend very closely on the United States. We need the help of the United States in stabilizing our political life. We do not object to receiving such helpful influence. But what does keep us continually resentful is the use of marines to protect foreign investors and keep in power an administration that is despotic, while doing nothing toward helping the people in general to better their condition. Let your influence be toward a positive program of improving our political, economic, educational and social life, not in suppressing self-expression and just nationalism. If you assume the authority to say we cannot have revolutions, then you must also assume the authority to compel our rulers, whom you protect, to give us political and economic justice. We are independent nations and we would like to run our own affairs. But we admit that economically we are bound inseparably to you; politically we need your steadying influence to bring all Central America into harmonious co-operative relations; and morally we need your stimulating example. But do not force this on us. Help us to keep our self-respect and our national honor while you help us to rid ourselves of the tyranny of our *caudillos*, of our individualism, our graft and our inertia. Please, Mr. Great Big Yankee Man, we know we need your capital and your powerful influence and we do admire you for many things, but please, fewer marines, fewer one-sided treaties, fewer demands for economic exploitation, and more help in developing the things that have made your own fine nation great."

In Nicaragua the outstanding influence is the hundred United States marines who live up on the hill dominating the city. A hundred marines are not many, but as one gentleman expressed it, "When we see that hundred up there, we see a hundred thousand behind them and then behind them a hundred million. So we know we must not displease *Tio Samuel*."

The American bank that owns the railroad and dictates the financial policies of the country and the American customs collectors are the predominant forces that persuade the Nicaraguans to court the favor of the United States or curse their luck, as the case may be.

As soon as I arrived at Managua, I had a perfect avalanche of callers and requests for engagements. For maybe this American could have some influence in getting his government to better their conditions. Soon my days were divided up, one with the editors, one with the educators, one with the literati, one with the cabinet, one with the supreme court, and so on.

The presidential elections were very close (August, 1920) and the big question with the Conservative party was, "Will our big Uncle stand by us as before and keep the opposition from armed rebellion, so we may continue in power?" The Liberals are no less insistently asking, "Will the United States force the Conservatives to let us vote at these elections so we may put in a man who represents the majority of the people?" It has often been said, and it seemed to me true, that the Conservative government in power could not stand for any time unless it was supported by the United States, for a large majority of the people were Liberals. As Senator Root said in discussing the Bryan-Chamorro treaty,

I am told that if the marines were withdrawn, the present president would be obliged to leave the country immediately or he would be expelled by a revolution. This situation raises a very serious question, not about the desirableness of the treaty, but about the way in which the treaty should be made. Can we afford to make a treaty with Nicaragua, granting us perpetual rights in that country, with a president who we have reason to believe does not represent more than a quarter of the people of the country, and who is maintained in office by our military force, and to whom we would, as a result of the treaty, pay a large sum of money to be disposed of by him as president? I should be sorry to see the United States get into that position. We don't want to maintain a government in Nicaragua by military force perpetually, and it is highly probable that if we were to withdraw our force after making such a treaty there would be a revolution and the treaty would be repudiated, leaving us in a position where our legitimate moral influence would be destroyed and nothing

but brute force left. There is a good deal of evidence that the other people of Central America look at the subject in this way. I should be very sorry to see the Central Americans convinced that we wish to rule them by force, for it would be the end of all our attempts to benefit them and help them along as we have been trying to do.

The Liberals now claim that, since the United States has interfered once with their internal affairs, the only just thing for it to do in the present instance is to compel fair elections—that if it simply keeps its hands off it will mean the continuance of the Conservatives in power, since they will count themselves in, however the election may swing.

The Liberals have been the opponents of intervention and of course have not been popular with Americans. In the early days of intervention, their leaders like Dr. Leonardo Arguillo, whose tract against intervention was used as a text in the University of Madrid, were very bitter in their denunciations of the situation. Under no circumstances then would our government allow them to attain power, for they would, it was thought, immediately break faith with American bondholders. These leaders now say that they fully recognize the obligations they have contracted with United States financial concerns and would hold rigidly to their agreements if they were elected. They claim that they are not anti-American nor desirous of cutting off relations with the United States and that it is not fair to hold them responsible for the sins of Zelaya, who was in no wise a representative Liberal, though he claimed to be of that party.

The beneficial results of the American intervention in Nicaragua seem to be three: peace, freedom of speech and the protection of foreign investors. For a country that has been the victim of unprincipled *caudillos* for many decades, where political opponents have been subject to torture and robbery, where property was unsafe and foreign interference continuous, these are indeed great benefits. The Nicaraguans put over against these benefits the following evils: The practical loss of self-determination; actual decrease in the number of schools and the weakening of the educational

system by turning it over largely to the church; excessive taxes which work against the poor and favor the rich; lack of any responsible body working for a constructive policy for improving the Nicaraguan people politically, economically, educationally or socially.

If the Chileans are the Yankees of South America, the Salvadoreans are the Chileans of Central America. A hard working population (comparatively), a lack of revolutions, numerous small industries, a well-organized army, emphasis on secondary education (always comparatively, remember), a strongly developed nationalism with a converse questioning concerning North American imperialism, and a pride of leadership among sister states—these and other characteristics remind one familiar with South American states of vigorous little Chile.

The most democratic president I met in all Latin America is Don Jorge Melendez, who talked with me nearly an hour recently in the most informal way about the people of Salvador, the difficulties of avoiding revolutions in Central America, financial and political relations with the United States, and other questions. He was greatly delighted to have North American visitors come to Salvador, he said, because he recognized the necessity of closer relations between his country and the United States and thought that such visits would add greatly to these relations. It is hard for the North American to understand the difficulties with which Central American governments have to cope. If the president attempts to introduce reforms too rapidly he has a revolution on hand. When Señor Melendez came into office he found an internal debt of three millions, principally back salaries, due to the loss of export and import duties during the war. This debt was paid off the first year, principally by a strict collection of the internal revenues on liquor, which unfortunately is one of the largest sources of income.

The interest on the national debt, held largely in England, has been so promptly met that additional credit, not yet used, had been extended. He is now working to get a small change in the banking laws to meet the conditions of

a large American bank which is desirous of opening a branch here.

As for internal improvements, the president said he had just returned from the celebration in connection with the opening of the railway from the south to Cajutapeque so that one may travel by rail from the southernmost port, La Union, to within twenty miles of the capital, covering the rest by auto at present but very soon by rail. He has just signed a contract with the International Railway of Central America, a North American company, to build the railroad from Santa Ana, near the Guatemalan border, to join the railroad at Zacapa, Guatemala, which runs to Puerto Barrios. Thus Salvador will have not only a railroad running the entire length of the country, but will be brought within six days of New Orleans.

How much this will mean may be judged from the fact that it now requires at least five or six weeks to get second class mail, to say nothing of freight, which comes from the United States via Panama, then up the west coast. Only first class mail is brought by mule across from the Atlantic port, Puerto Barrios. The contract calls for the completion of this new road before February 15, 1923.

The president spoke of the problem of education as being one of the most difficult, since the nation had been tied to old systems which it was hard to change. But here he has recently appointed a special commission to study the subject and he expects them to completely modernize the public school curriculum.

In the president's inaugural address, March 19, 1919, he proposed the institution of a national campaign against illiteracy. This has recently been started. At that time he said,

I call the attention of thinking men and especially of the Department of Public Instruction to the necessity of wiping out the worst of our defects, illiteracy. How is it possible to conceive of effective progress and definite implanting of a republic when 70 per cent of the people cannot read and write? It is humiliating to announce such a sad condition, but it is necessary to leave aside sweet sounding phrases and face frankly our situation, understanding that we are building on the sand if we do not teach those

who form the greatest majority of the nation how to read and write. Public instruction must receive new impulses. Our public schools are still influenced by chaotic systems and it is necessary to popularize our instruction, having it penetrate to the very lowest social strata.

If, at the conclusion of my term of office, this disturbing percentage of illiteracy has been considerably reduced, I will have a legitimate pride, for by such diminution we shall have rendered our nation the greatest service in preparing the present generation to realize and carry forward the highest ideals of a democracy.

On inquiring of the president concerning a map showing the military posts of the country, he explained that while they did not want any more war yet it was necessary to be prepared. In twenty-four hours, by communicating his commands to three brigadier-generals, he could mobilize an army of one hundred and sixty thousand men. One year military service is obligatory for all men. The soldiers are given a thorough instruction in common school branches and in English, so that when they leave the army they are much better prepared for fighting life's battles than before.

Because Salvador was the only Central American republic that did not join the allies in the war against Germany and because she has recently asked the United States for a definition of the Monroe Doctrine, it was particularly interesting to hear the president declare his desire for close relations with the United States. Because his ideas seem to be so well represented by the words of his brother, whom he has just succeeded in the presidency, I give them to you here:

If American diplomacy, in its relations with the Central American peoples, maintains unimpaired the principles of equity and justice laid down by President Wilson, principles of cordiality, confraternity and respect for the sovereignty of these peoples, such a policy of mutual consideration and good understanding will be the foundation for closer commercial relations between the United States and Salvador, as well as among the other republics of the American continent.

The best means of rapprochement for two peoples is an intimate reciprocal knowledge of their peculiar moods, their psychology, their ideals and initiative in the path of civilization. North Americans have made very little systematic and methodical effort to comprehend the characteristics of the political and social evolution of our small nationalities. As a general rule, with but

very few exceptions, North Americans know very little about our peoples because of false representations prompted by impulsive meddling with these young states. We have been dubbed restless peoples, ungovernable hordes, uneducated masses incapable of civilization. But in spite of all this, for twenty-four years not one single internal revolution or political commotion of any importance has taken place in this republic, which has lived in perfect peace, devoted to its work during a long period of progressive reconstruction.

False and biased report spread by some writers in North America, and the little importance given to our markets, have contributed to the neglect by Americans of the study of these peoples to such an extent that they have but very scant knowledge of their commercial geography.

The breaking out of the European war was necessary in order that some serious thought should be given to Central and South America, for prominent men in the United States to undertake the task of bringing about the intellectual rapprochement of our respective countries, and for these nations to be deemed worthy of study and encouragement.

We desire to know more intimately North America's cultural status, its scholastic and municipal institutions, its methods of cultivation of the land, its financial organization, its literature, and above all its political institutions since our system of government is analogous to that of the American people.

The interchange of university professors and students would be an effective means of promoting mutual acquaintance. And if it were possible and an agreement could be reached between the United States and other countries of Central and South America, nothing could contribute more to the strengthening of our intellectual bonds than the foundation of a Pan American University in the United States.

The men of the two Americas, educated side by side in the same school, would work together to strengthen mutual bonds of everlasting confraternity, and Spanish America, through an army of its men thoroughly imbued with the practical methods of American education, would benefit by a new standard of culture more in harmony with the requirements of modern life.

The sending of lecturers to our universities, the establishment of good daily papers and magazines in the Spanish language, having a wide circulation in these countries, will contribute to the spread of information about the resources and characteristics of the North Americans in our midst.

It behooves the statesmen, bankers and manufacturers of the United States to make effective the most important part in the relations between the United States and Salvador. There are no prejudices among us against the United States. We admire the strength and fearlessness of the people of the United States in their financial struggles, in their republican traditions and in the doctrines of their publicists; we study closely the solutions reached

in their political evolution and their great administrative progress, and in their pedagogical progress we find an inspiration for the improvement and reform of our methods of teaching.

Conditions are propitious for bringing closer together the ties that bind us to the democracy of the North, founded by Washington and made greater by Franklin, Jefferson and many other great statesmen.

Behind those words of Don Carlos Melendez is the fact that during the war, when he was president, Salvador had much pro-German sentiment, which kept the country from entering the war on the side of the Allies, although it declared a benevolent neutrality toward them. For many years there has been a more marked tendency in Salvador than in other Central American countries to question the intentions of the United States with reference to Latin America.

Her protest against the Bryan-Chamorro treaty by which Nicaragua gave the United States the right to build a canal through that country and establish a naval base in the Bay of Fonseca was most vigorous. She claimed that the bay is the common property of the three countries which it touches and that the establishment of a naval base there and the fortification of some of the islands would give the United States, with long range guns, absolute command of Salvadorean territory and in case of war make her neutrality impossible.

It may be said in parenthesis that when one sees the bay it is easy to understand the truth of this statement. The fact that this protest, although sustained by a majority of the Central American court of justice, was unheeded by the United States did not serve to lessen suspicion of America's imperialistic motives.

During the Second Pan-American Scientific Congress in Washington in 1915 the Salvadorean delegate, Dr. Alonso Reyes Guerra, bearded the eagle in its nest and said plainly that before there could be any real Pan-Americanism four things were necessary: first, a declaration that the prohibition against the conquest of American territory contained in the Monroe doctrine applies to the United States as well as to European countries; second, the adoption of the Drago

doctrine, which makes the collection of debts exclusively an internal question to be handled within each nation itself; third, elimination of all exceptions to the doctrine of non-intervention; fourth, the institution of obligatory arbitration of all international disputes.

When President Wilson made his address to the Mexican editors, which was the most satisfactory statement of a decade concerning the North American attitude toward Latin America, President Carlos Melendez of Salvador immediately wrote to President Wilson saying that

As the ruler of the Salvadorean people, as a citizen of Latin America, I wish to express to you my firm adhesion to the ideas of justice and sentiments of fraternity with which your speech to the Mexican journalists is replete. In expounding the Monroe Doctrine you have dispelled prejudgments and unfavorable conjectures that have for many years hampered the full blossoming and propagation of principles of true cordiality which must for the common good exist between the United States and the other republics of the American continent.

When the United States saw fit to have a special clause placed in the League of Nations pact, reserving the rights involved in the Monroe doctrine without defining them, Salvador spoke for the rest of Latin America and asked the United States to define the meaning of the doctrine, since other American nations entering the League would, with the new clause, themselves recognize as binding this same doctrine. Without a definition of the Monroe doctrine these nations would be in the position of a man signing a note without knowing its amount.

As will be recalled, our state department simply quoted in reply a part of President Wilson's address to the Second Pan American Scientific Congress. This has not satisfied many, who say that an address of a president cannot be taken as the official declaration of a nation. But the government of Salvador, which under the young Melendez is sympathetic to the United States and is backed by a public sentiment of no little strength since the victory of the Allies, has outwardly accepted the reply as satisfactory.

Indications are that the endeavors of Salvador to find out if there is a colored gentleman in the Pan American wood-

pile will cease temporarily at least, and that the growing commercial and financial relations with the United States will cause, at least apparently, a more sympathetic attitude toward us. That this friendship shall be real as well as official, there should be a close study of Salvador and other Central American countries by the government and the people of the United States. We should be represented in those countries by diplomats who have a background of history, language and culture that will enable them to penetrate beneath surface appearance and politeness to a real understanding of the underlying feelings and motives of Central American life.

The outstanding event in Guatemala recently is, of course, the fall of Cabrera, the last of the old order of dictators in Latin America except one—Gomez of Venezuela.

I was in Guatemala both immediately before and immediately after the revolution. Having talked with Cabrera about his policies during my first visit, I desired to compare him with the new president on my second visit, which resulted in an experience illustrative of the difficulty of keeping straight on Central American politics.

Asking a friend whether he thought I could see the president to find about his proposed program, he replied that he thought I could and told me where to find him. Following the directions I came to a private house which had a few soldiers in front of the door and, on explaining that I wished to see the president, my card was taken in where I saw a *patio* full of ragged soldiers. Pretty soon a gentleman in military uniform came out and asked me what I wanted. I told him that I was anxious to see the president and talk with him about his new program. The gentleman seemed to be a little confused and I again explained that I was now going back to the United States and wished to carry a message from the new president to the American people. But still he did not seem to understand and I began to wonder if my Spanish was at fault. After I had made the third attempt to explain to him how important it was for me to see the chief magistrate and find out his attitude toward things American, he looked at me in a queer way and said,

"You must want to see the new president. It is the old one that we have here in jail." As I had seen the old president a few weeks before, I had no desire to see him again and hurried on up to the house of President Herrera, to which I was directed, where I had a long interview with him. When I finally found him, Don Carlos Herrera, the new president, said:

Tell the people of the United States that you met in Guatemala a friend of the Americans. As to my program, in two words, it is to follow as closely as possible the development of democracy as it has taken place in the United States. In Guatemala we have everything to do and I know of no better way of doing it than studying carefully what has been done in the United States. I have for a long time been a great admirer of that country. My two boys were educated there. (Indeed these two boys are American citizens.) I have visited the country myself; have for a long time had business connections with many of its large commercial organizations and believe thoroughly that the best thing for our country's development is to maintain cordial relations with the United States.

President Herrera is a new type of ruler for Guatemala. He is not a military man or even a politician. During the long despotic reign of Cabrera, who had the most complete spy system ever developed and who persecuted his critics wherever they might be found in any part of the world, who kept his prisons filled with political offenders and who allowed no open opposition, the dictator had never been quite able to lay hands on Herrera, one of the richest men in the country. For Don Carlos is not only a splendid business man but has also proved himself to be careful and diplomatic. He is one of the few men who maintained his independence and yet has not been openly persecuted by Cabrera. His large fortune is invested in sugar and coffee plantations. He is probably the largest exporter of both commodities in Guatemala and maintains financial relations with many of the big banks of England and the United States, in which countries he is by no means a stranger.

His administration will no doubt be mainly a business administration, devoted to the development of Guatemala's wonderful economic resources. Already business men, both

native and American, are planning for great increases in commercial development. Under the Cabrera régime merchants did not dare order more than they needed for immediate delivery, for they never knew what tomorrow might bring forth. But now merchants are placing large orders with every confidence that they are entering a new régime. Already American Commercial travelers are feeling this optimism as reflected in increased orders.

President Herrerra was anxious to have me see his minister of foreign affairs, Señor Aguirre, in order to talk with him more in detail concerning the lines along which the administration would like the help of the United States. Señor Aguirre is a cultured gentleman who has traveled widely, speaks several languages and is in every way a cosmopolite. He had charge of Guatemala's exhibit at the San Francisco Exposition and has been active in many of the international expositions of the world. While he is a farmer in the sense that he owns a big plantation and gets his income from it, yet he is especially interested in the matter of international relations and has made a deep study of the question from the standpoint of economics. Señor Aguirre said:

We must have the help of the United States, along three lines particularly. First, we need your moral help. In the past *Guatemaltecos* have had to hang their heads because of the utter backwardness of their country and the lack of liberty we have enjoyed. All of this must be changed. We must come out into modern life. We realize that fundamentally our problem is a moral one and we are not strong enough to cope with this problem alone. We earnestly hope for the help of the United States in the development of our moral life. Second, we need financial help. Guatemala is one of the richest countries in the world. There is practically nothing that we cannot produce. We have not only the finest coffee in the world but wonderful sugar and all kinds of tropical fruits. There is an opportunity to further develop our agriculture and also for building factories. With all of our fruit, canning factories would give splendid results. Our water power furnishes great opportunities for the development of electricity. We ought to have several North American banks immediately.

There is also an opening for wholesale and retail stores handling exclusively American goods.

In the third place we need your help in education. Here almost everything is to be done. While the previous administration

pretended to be a friend of education and erected a certain number of showy buildings, they have been little more than shells. The education of the more than a million Indians in our population is in itself a tremendous problem. We must make our education modern and to whom can we look for help so much as to the United States which has advanced so rapidly along educational lines?

My idea also is to make Guatemala a modern Mecca for American tourists. We have one of the finest climates in the world, some of the most beautiful scenery, with mountains and lakes more wonderful than those of Switzerland and we are within three days of New Orleans. Of course we must first prepare for these tourists by building automobile roads and hotels. This we expect to begin very soon. If we can have a stream of American tourists coming to Guatemala the development of our country will be assured. Heretofore we have lived to ourselves. The former government discouraged visitors to the country, as it did not care for the outside world to know of its abuses. But our policy is to throw open the gates to all friends of progress. We want the world to come and see us.

The greatest criticism that the Guatemalan people had of the United States government during the exciting days of the revolution, was the publication in the Guatemalan press of a note from the state department which indicated that our government was very much opposed to the revolution. The revolutionary forces had conducted themselves in a most remarkable way. In fact nothing like it has ever been known in Latin America. For four months they carried on a campaign against Cabrera by means of the press and through public addresses, continually stating that they did not intend to resort to arms but were determined to make this a peaceful revolution. They stuck to this determination even when they were fired upon by Cabrera's soldiers during one of their peaceful parades. The reform or "unionist" movement represented at least 90 per cent of the nation. It did not therefore seem consistent with the history of the United States or with the ideals of liberty for which we stand that our government should publish the statement which seemed to command the Guatemalans not to revolt against one of the worst tyrannies that any people have been subjected to, and who Americans ought to know never kept a promise for reform.

The following is the American note which caused such unfavorable comment:

Mr. Benton McMillin, envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary of the United States of America to Guatemala, after the issuance of the president's proclamation, issued, with the authority of his government, the following for publication:

"The steady policy of the government of the United States is to encourage constitutional government and free elections in Central America. Having the greatest interest therefore in the constitutional progress of Guatemala, the government of the United States has learned with great pleasure of the proclamation of President Estrada Cabrera regarding constitutional guarantees and has confidence in view of the statements just made to this government by President Estrada Cabrera, that he will faithfully carry out the reforms proclaimed.

The government of the United States is opposed to revolutionary measures and firmly believes in view of President Cabrera's proclamation there is no excuse for starting a revolutionary movement in Guatemala and that therefore in the eyes of the civilized world the gravest responsibility would rest with any man or group of men who should start such a movement. The government of the United States particularly desires to see peaceful constitutional progress in Guatemala and would regard with horror any actions which should cause a needless and inexcusable revolution to be commenced in that country." (From *Diario de Centro-America*, Guatemala, April 5, 1920.)

It ought to be said that this note was published by Minister McMillin not because of his approval of its contents but by order of his superior authority.

The final fall of Cabrera came when the National Assembly declared him insane and unfit for office and elected Don Carlos Herrera to replace him. A few days before this action Cabrera's assistant minister of war, his faithful friend and servant for a decade, reported to his master that some of his troops had deserted. This so enraged Cabrera that he knocked the man down with the butt of his pistol and kicked him around. The man finally escaped and took refuge in the English legation and afterwards revealed to the National Assembly that Cabrera was living a life in his palace outside of the city which showed him to be insane. He kept in his house some old Indian witches and herb-doctors whose advice he continually accepted, and his suspicions of his closest friends and his cruelty to everyone

showed that he was not in his right mind. After the Assembly had declared him insane he began to bombard the city and for eight days there were the most frightful conditions in the capital.

The American legation was besieged by a large number of people who were afraid of their lives and for a week Minister and Mrs. McMillin had 181 refugees in the legation. Most of these were women and children. There were fourteen members of President Herrera's family there; some forty Americans, and the rest represented all grades of *Guatemaltecos*. It is easy to imagine the confusion that existed at that time. American marines were brought up from the *Tacoma* on the Pacific shore and from the *Niagara* on the Atlantic side. Machine guns were stationed on both sides of the legation and marines stood guard in order to protect the legation, which was several times threatened by mobs who were infuriated against two Americans who had been in league with President Cabrera in exploiting the people.

One of the most remarkable things about it all was the heroism and unselfish service of Mrs. McMillin, who was everything to everyone during those eight days, giving up her own room to three of the women who were about to give birth to children and going from one part of the house to the other ministering to the sick and quieting the nervous. The fourth day of the siege the house was put under military rule. The cook of the *Niagara* was brought up to take charge of the rationing, which was the only thing that saved Mrs. McMillin from a complete breakdown, her own servants being so excited that they could not even make the coffee.

Things in Guatemala are rapidly becoming reorganized and there are evidences everywhere of the new day. The ordinary revolution in Central America is an opera bouffe affair, but this upheaval in Guatemala has been justified if any revolution in the world was ever justified. It has been carried out in the quietest possible way. When the city was fired upon the Unionist party did not have any arms whatever with which to protect themselves. They had maintained, up to the very last, their determination not

to resort to arms. They were able to defend the city when it was attacked by Cabrera only because the government troops themselves turned to the new régime. Many of the men who are now in power have suffered terrible tortures for long years for the sake of liberty. They have learned by these sufferings the cost of liberty and it is the judgment of people who know Guatemala best that they will work for a really democratic government in one of the richest countries of all the Americas.

The countries mentioned presented to me the most interesting situations and there is not time to describe the others. Cuba, by means of the Platt amendment and the predominant economic influence of American capital which owns most of the great sugar and tobacco estates, can have no political or economic policies not approved by the United States. Our protection of the Conservative government there has brought immense prosperity to certain classes.

But if we do not want Cuba to become an American Ireland we must study with her some necessary constructive policies.

Honduras means "the depths" and that unfortunate country has almost reached them in many regards. She does whatever we suggest for her to do. But our suggestions so far are purely political and not educational.

The revolutionary government of Costa Rica has learned the impossibility of standing without the recognition of the United States, and a constitutional government, grateful to us for our stand, is now reëstablishing itself as it looks to us for support.

Panamá seldom challenges the American influence, but the presence of our soldiers in the interior of the country and the shirt-sleeve diplomacy used in demanding the Island of Taboga, caused the most regrettable insult to General Pershing and shows we will get much more by adopting some fine Spanish phrases than by shouting "hands up!"

Summing up, my first-hand observations in the Caribbean lead me to the following conclusions:

1. The United States really has here at the present time a colonial proposition.

2. The lack of a frank recognition of the situation and lack of colonial experience have led us into mistakes that have made our intervention more resented than is necessary.

3. Failure to mark out a definite policy, and leaving matters largely to the military, has led to a policy of suppression rather than of constructive helpfulness.

4. Intervention being principally to conserve order, protect American investors and ward off European interference, the reactionary parties in the various countries are too often sustained and help is too often confined to material matters with no consideration for building up education.

I would respectfully suggest the following as helpful steps in dealing with the all important question of our relations with the Caribbean countries:

1. A strong department with recognized responsibility in the United States government to study conditions and advise the executive and legislative powers concerning relations between this country and smaller countries specially dependent upon us. This department could well have an advisory committee made up of some outstanding private citizens who are in a position to aid in such work. Immediate economic, educational and social surveys should be made to determine the exact situation and needs of the various countries.

2. Signing of treaties with certain Caribbean countries that recognize their sovereignty but secure the aid of the United States in developing stable government, fair elections, improved educational facilities, needed financial accommodation, etc.

3. Withdrawal of United States marines from countries where now stationed.

4. Special effort to help in the broad education of the people of these countries through both government and private agencies.

5. Cultivation of appreciation of the history, literature, social life and problems of these countries on the part of Americans.

6. Turn on the light and let the peoples interested publicly determine and frankly avow the policy for their servants to follow in forming relations.